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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000686

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAQ KMDR OIIP MU

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: DIPLOMACY AND IRAN, DAHAB POLITICAL
AFTERMATH, AMERICAN DOUBLE STANDARDS, IRAQ ATTACK VIDEO

Diplomatic Options for Iran

The government-owned daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) on April 27 commented on diplomatic options available to the U.S. and Iran ("The Iranian Nuclear Program and Increasing Calls for War"):

"According to a report by the London-based Foreign Policy Center, war should not be the only solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis. In an interview with a Russian newspaper, one of the report's authors, Hugh Barnes, explained that it appears America is preparing to wage a war or military operation against Iran using tactical nuclear weapons... He also noted that his Center's report confirms that America's mobilization against Iran is among the most dangerous and serious mistakes in American policy. Barnes noted that there are various diplomatic solutions that the American administration could follow to deal with international concerns about war. Iran, on the other hand, should acknowledge that it has joined the international community by signing the terms of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and should abide by it."

Regional Politics Post-Dahab

¶2. "Oman" followed its earlier coverage on the Dahab bombings with an April 30 editorial, "Active Moves to Contain Mounting Tensions":

"The region is witnessing a lot of tension. In this respect come the talks that [Omani Foreign Minister] Youssef bin Alawi has held with senior U.S. and European officials. The Sultanate has condemned the terrorist acts in Dahab and demonstrated its support for the Egyptian government... The summit between King Abdullah and President Mubarak is important because it shows that Egypt continues to play a role in enhancing regional stability and reconciling Jordanian-Palestinian differences. This summit is especially the case now that there is a new Israeli government, one likely to be more stable than previous governments given its strong majority in the Knesset."

American Double Standards

¶3. The privately owned Arabic daily "Al-Watan" (circulation 42,000) on April 30 carried an editorial on "Double Standards of Interest and the Confusing of Principles":

"The world is witnessing a clear duplicity in the standards and principles used to treat sensitive international issues, whether economic or cultural... The great powers control the international scene and implement double standards when dealing with different governments, organizations, and individuals. The suffering of Palestinians -- and the praise lavished on the Israeli government that kills them -- is the greatest example. Iraq, too, has born the brunt of these double standards, suffering from an invasion in the name of 'democracy.'"

Online: Strong Response to Iraq-Attack Video

¶4. Internet message board "al-Sablah" is Oman's highest-profile online forum for political and social discourse, touching on issues and personalities rarely addressed in the Sultanate's conventional media. An April 28 thread featuring a video of an alleged attack on an American Humvee in Iraq has to date attracted over 3,000 hits, one of the highest totals of all topics. The posting's title and accompanying text, "Brutal Attack in Ramadi Filmed by U.S. Forces," as well as the video file itself, were taken from

www.ogrish.com (a site that describes itself as "featuring uncensored events including: beheading videos, execution images, accident pictures, gruesome scenes from Iraq, etc."). All 24 responses to date support the attack and express jihadist sentiments: "thanks to those who destroy the Crusaders and all their helpers." "May God give victory to the mujahideen...fighting enemies of God and the faith in Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, Afghanistan, the Philippines, India, and in all places in the world."

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